

Revitalizing Agriculture



Photo by IMC

Agriculture is a way of life for 70 percent of Afghanistan's people. However, instability, coupled with the region's four-year drought, devastated the country's food production capacity and impoverished farmers.

USAID is helping farmers re-establish production and become more profitable and efficient, by rehabilitating irrigation systems and providing tools, agricultural equipment, fertilizer, and seeds. Revitalizing agriculture is key to the growth of the Afghan economy.

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- Increased food production and reduced the number of Afghans dependent on food aid in 2002 from approximately 10 million to 6 million. Further progress will be made in 2003.
- Contributed to an 82 percent increase in fall 2002 wheat yields by providing fertilizer and improved wheat seed to 113,000 farmers in 12 provinces. The resulting estimated increase in wheat production translates into an additional \$69 net income per farmer—whereas average family income in similar countries is only \$100–\$200 total per year.
- Established a crushing facility in Helmand to produce and market peanut and other oils from the high-value crops produced with USAID assistance.
- Promotes high-value crop diversification (e.g., grapes, olives, peanuts, cotton) in poppy-growing areas for approximately 18,000 farmers. In exchange for participating in the program, farmers must give up producing poppy and are closely monitored. Since this program started, cotton production in the program area increased three-fold.

Website: www.usaid.gov/afghanistan

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